



Asking Better Questions



Veterinary teams often use rapid-fire questions that elicit short answers from clients because they feel it allows them to gather medical history quickly. However, research shows that open-ended questions prompt more complete and helpful responses.

Asking structured questions and open-ended questions:

- ❑ Gives people permission to admit to or describe realities at home
- ❑ Steers replies toward actionable information
- ❑ Sets expectations for the level of detail needed for you to comprehend the full nutritional and environmental situation at home

It takes time to form new habits when asking questions. Start by practicing these easy swaps.



Closed Questions
{Provides less helpful information}

Open Questions
{Provides more complete responses}

Any concerns about [pet's name]'s appetite, mobility, energy, or behavior?

Tell me about any changes you've noticed.

What do you feed [pet's name]?

Tell me everything [pet's name] eats throughout the day, starting first thing in the morning on through bedtime

Do you give treats, too?

What are [pet's name]'s favorite snacks?

Is [pet's name] a slow or picky eater?

Talk me through [pet's name]'s eating process from the time food is offered through when the bowl is empty or [pet's name] walks away.

Does [pet's name] have access to your other pets' food?

What challenges do you face at home limiting access to your other pets' food?

Does [pet's name] beg for your food?

Name everyone in your home or in your life who sneaks [pet's name] people food.

Are you happy with [pet's name]'s current food?

What do you like (and not like, if anything) about what you're currently feeding?

Why do you feed that?

That's interesting. Tell me more.

Are you open to my pet food recommendation?

I'd like to go through all the benefits of switching [pet's name] to a different food. Before we do that, though, tell me about any concerns you have about considering a new pet food.